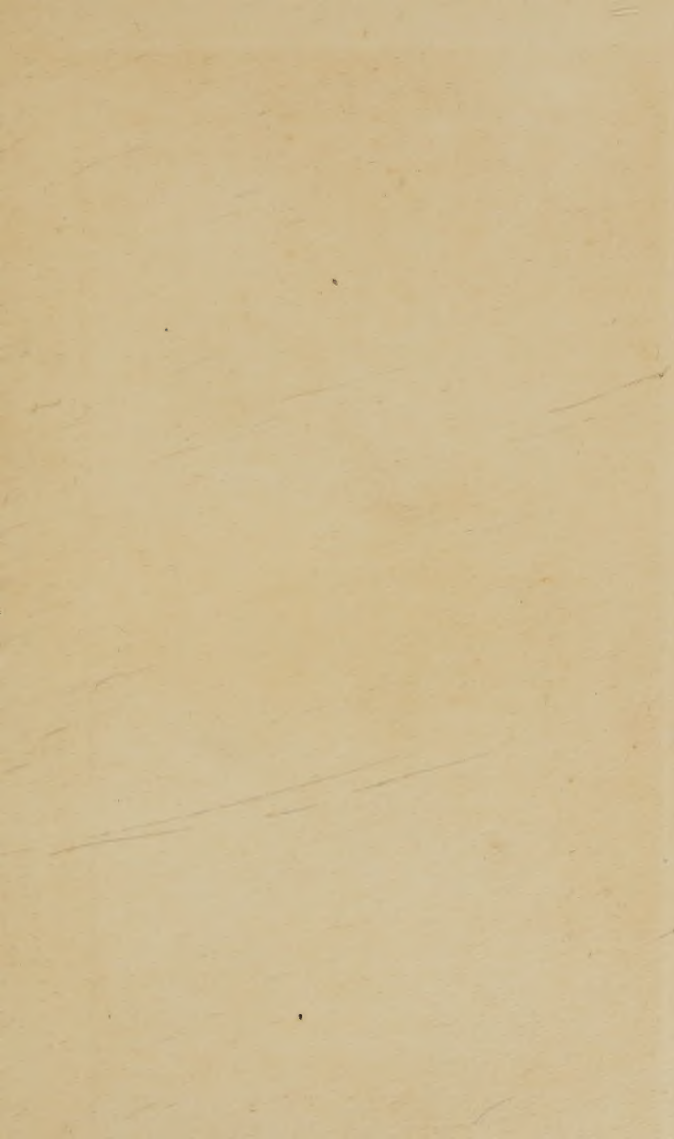


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ALEXANDER SMELLIE



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HIS GLORY

BY THE REV.

ALEXANDER SMELLIE, D.D.

"Glory as of an Only Begotten from a Father."
ST. JOHN I. 14.

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HIS GLORY

I

THE PRE-EXISTENCE

“Glory as of an Only Begotten from a Father.”—*St. John* i. 14.

A MAN is known, the proverb says, by the company that he keeps. John the Apostle, who was on the border of eternity when he penned the Gospel which bears his name, had been living for many years in the company of one surpassing Person—Jesus Christ, his Saviour, his Lord, and his Friend. For three summers, when he was young, he looked daily into Christ’s face, he hearkened to the tones of His voice, he walked and talked with

cf. Alex. Whyte
and teach us to
pray" pp. 95, 96.

Him in the fields of Galilee and the streets of Jerusalem ; his own hands were permitted to handle the Word of Life. Then, for half a century and more, Christ had been away from the sight of his eyes and the hearing of his ears, back in the Father's house which He forsook for John's sake and the sake of a sinning and dying world. But from the outset, and all through, until he wrote those astonishing chapters, it was the same with the Apostle. Christ absorbed him, possessed him, drew him, and he followed on. His mind and heart closed round Christ, leaving little room for other studies and inferior loves. That one Face, far from vanish, rather grew.

There were the three initial years. You scarcely have an echo in them of John's speeches, or a glimpse into John's activities. He is silent as to himself, because he is busy listening

to his Master. He is obliterated, because Jesus is All. Peter is enamoured of Jesus too, and worships at His feet ; but Peter has not yet lost altogether the memory of himself ; he rushes into the story with that impulsive dialect of his, and those assertive energies and plans ; it is the Lord and Peter figuring side by side.

John is different. He has crossed himself out. He is nothing. No man save Jesus Only occupies the canvas ; and John reads wonders and magnitudes and sufficiencies and an exceeding grace in Jesus, which outrun Peter's conceptions and dreams. And the succeeding half-century, since Christ ascended while John tarried until his Master should come again for him—what was it but a long-sustained contemplation of his Lord, a deepening reverence, an increasing intimacy, a sacred and boundless

delight ? Dante pictures the procession of the saints :

Behind them all,
One single old man, sleeping as he moved,
With a shrewd visage.

“Sleeping” and “shrewd” ; there is John. He broods, meditates, ponders ; he loses himself in Christ through the day and through the night. But his is the opposite of a vague and idle quietism. No intellect is keener and more alert, and no results are vaster and more unmistakable. If he pursues the Divine vision, he grasps the vision also, as completely as the soul of man can grasp it ; and he tells others what it means. Yes, a man is judged and understood by the company he keeps ; and would that you and I kept the best Company as constantly and as confidingly as the beloved Apostle did !

One dominated by such convictions, and by a devotion so consuming, is likely to have his own language. He will not borrow his accent and idiom from any one else. He looks into his heart and speaks. Sir Edward Cook discusses the charm and power of Ruskin's writing, the significance and the opulence which mark his prose, the secrets of his mastery. "At bottom," he concludes, "it comes to this: that he had something to say, that he said it in the way that was natural to him, and that nature had endowed him with exquisite sensibility. The style was the man."

So with John, but in a degree much higher and a measure much more ample. He had something to say, something unmatchable, strange and sweet and solemn. He said it in the way that was natural to him—the way of the seer and the theologian,

the discoverer and the mystic, "sleeping" but "shrewd." And nature had endowed him with an exquisite sensibility, but not nature merely or mainly, for its equipment would have been quite inadequate—the grace of God and the quickening illumination of the Holy Spirit behind and above nature, interpenetrating it through and through, and subliming it to altitudes it had not otherwise attained. With John, also the style is the man. He utters his thoughts of the Lord, his First and Midst and Last, characteristically, individually, and after his own special fashion.

One remarks this very plainly, that he has not a wide and copious vocabulary; there is no torrential flood of words; the words are fit and few. He is not afraid to repeat his favourites among them; he repeats them of set and deliberate

purpose. Nouns like "Light" and "Life" and "Witness," "the World," and "the Truth"; verbs like "to Believe" and "to Know"; never lose their interest for him, and are reiterated again and again. They carry in their apparent simplicity an extraordinary intrinsic wealth. They are not notions so much as facts. Each is a piece of gold; and the gold is that of fairyland, which has magical uses and values; rather let us say, it is the gold of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the boundlessness of its worth can never be computed.

I have thought, I trust under God's prompting, that we may, humbly and profitably, look at one of St. John's distinctive words, as he employs it of the Person Who was all the world to him. He keeps for Jesus Christ the noun "Glory," and the verb "to Glorify" or "to

be Glorified.”¹ Forty-two times, says M. Godet, the devout Swiss commentator, he diadems his Lord with the far-flashing word. Forty-two times!—from such a galaxy of stars we can only select here and there some shining instances. Perhaps we may gather them into four groups or constellations, with Christ as the central Sun in each of the four. There is, to start with, the Glory of the Pre-existence. It is followed by the Glory of the Ministry. That leads on to the amazing Glory of the Cross. And, as the climax and coronation of all, there is the Glory of the Reward.

I

To-day let us stand, reverent and adoring, in the Temple which is dark with excess of bright, to survey the Lord Who sits on its throne, high

¹ Δόξα, δοξάζειν, δοξάζεσθαι.

and lifted up. Seraphim veil their faces and feet before Him ; and we, who are dust and ashes, who are foolishness and sin, cannot bow low enough in the august and awful Presence. But this God is our God for ever and ever. He is our Saviour from His untrackable past. We are comforted, as well as condemned, by the Glory of the Pre-existence.

“Glory” is indeed God’s own word. It belongs to Him. He challenges an indefeasible right to it. It is His property—a plot of ground which, in large measure at least, He has fenced about for Himself. Of course, there is a glory which is human. But, frequently, it is—

A hollow thing,
A lie, a vanity,
Tinsel and paint.

It is the simulacrum, the counterfeit, the image and the mask, but

not the reality. It is that *vainglory of life*, in one guise or in another, of which John writes in his Epistle, and which he is sure will soon pass utterly away. And where the human glory is of a better sort, it is not inherent but derived ; it comes down from above, from the Father of all lights and glories ; it is that reflection of the radiance of God which, the rabbis said, gleamed and sparkled in the features of Adam in his innocence, and was the first among the six ethereal things he lost in his fall, but which sometimes we find restored in the looks and lineaments of those whom Christ has saved, and is saving more and more.

“ A redeemed man,” James Sme-
tham protests, and I hope we agree,
“ is a resplendent thing to meet in
a lane, or in a parlour, or anywhere—
your brother whom you have seen.”
But, originally and in its noblest com-

pass, Glory is God's word. John was recalling this when he took it and annexed it, emphatically and consistently, to Christ. He was, in clearest consciousness of what he was doing, and with definite design, giving to Christ something which, properly and essentially, is God's, and is no other's.

The Old Testament, on which the Apostle had nurtured his soul from childhood, is filled with the idea of the Glory of Jehovah. In law and prophecy and psalm, the phrase is a synonym for Jehovah's revealed character and being, His greatness, His manifestation of Himself in history, His marvellous works, His rounded and incomparable perfection. It is the combination of qualities making up His transcendence — not His power alone, nor His righteousness alone, nor His wisdom alone, nor His gentleness alone, but all of

them wedded in a peerless marriage and unity.

Moreover, it is this combination of qualities disclosed and rendered evident in luminous vision, in fiery brightness. The Glory of God is not hidden entirely from the scrutiny of men. It is not an abstract and academic doctrine, which the mind may investigate and the heart may feed upon, but which never leaps forth into the open, from behind the curtain of the skies, and out of the distant chambers and deeps which are its native abode. On the contrary, it is the unveiling of God. It is a theophany, a splendour, the majesty of the Lord of which men and women are spectators. It lingers in the pillar of the Shekinah over the Tabernacle, and the congregation watches it there. Moses prays that it may be shown to him, and he beholds its back parts and hears

Jehovah proclaim His Name, *The Lord God merciful and gracious*. In the year that King Uzziah died, the young Isaiah is convicted by its pure white light of his own uncleanness, and then is told *Thy sin is purged*; the holy love of God is Isaiah's lesson in the heavenly Glory. At a later day, beside the river Chebar, Ezekiel gazes on the living creatures, and the rushing wheels, and the eyes that search every corner, above and below, near and far; and so has burned into him the Glory of God's vigilance and activity and all-embracing government and reign.

Thus, by divers portions and in divers manners, Jehovah revealed to the fathers of the Jewish people the miracle of His being—that there is none like Him, “most high, most good, most powerful, most almighty; most merciful, yet most just; most

beautiful, yet most strong ; unchangeable, yet changing all things ; never new, and never old ; ever in action, yet ever at rest.”¹

What if, even in the ancient time, the revelation came always through Jesus, Who is habitually the Logos, Word and Outgoing and Expression of the Invisible God ? Was it Jesus, Who tarried in conversation with Moses for those ineffable minutes among the rocks of Sinai ; Jesus, Who abased Isaiah to the dust, and lifted him to sonship and communion and consecration ; Jesus, Who bade Ezekiel be certain that above the voice of many waters the Lord on high is mighty ?

The divines of two and three centuries ago loved to teach that every apocalypse of God in the Old Testament was a brief appearance, a passing visit, of Christ,

¹ Augustine, “ The Confessions,” i. 4.

before the fullness of the time had come, and He emptied Himself, and was born in Bethlehem—born to grant us not a fitful but a steadfast Presence ; “ a sojourn,” as Calvin puts it, “ and not a theophany ” any more ; and I like to think that these divines were right. This much, at any rate, is beyond dispute, that, when John attaches to Jesus the great attribute of Glory, he gives Him that which is God’s, the light that never was on sea or land, the character which no mere man since the world began has had or can have. Out of pre-existent Deity, and trailing the clouds of Jehovah’s Glory with Him from His early home, He descends Who is your Redeemer and mine. Lo, this is our God, and we have waited for Him. What else, whom else, do we need ? What helper and healer, deliverer and lord, can compare with Jesus Christ ?

II

But John has his illustrations of a word which, in itself, signifies so much. He dips his sounding-line down once, twice, thrice, into the unfathomed and unplumbed depths of the Pre-existence of our Saviour.

Consider, he says first, how Christ's is the Glory of a Singular Kinship. He is related to God in a manner which is unprecedented and solitary. *Glory as of an Only-Begotten from a Father*¹—that is the Apostle's account of it. A mystery this, which we dare not attempt to solve. It carries us up and up to the third heaven. It takes us behind the veil into the Most Holy Place. Father and Son are alone; a tie binds them which saints and angels do not share; the divine nature which is in the First Person passes

¹ John i. 14.

undiminished into the Second Person ; the communication of its powers and its blessednesses is without limit, without stint, without hindrance, overflowing and free.

“ They had him into the study,” Bunyan narrates of his Pilgrim, “ where they showed him records of the greatest antiquity ; in which, as I remember my dream, they showed him first the Pedigree of the Lord of the Hill, that He was the Son of the Antient of Days and came by an eternal generation.” The Son of the Antient of Days Who comes by an eternal generation, the Fellow and the Equal of God, the Only-Born—that is our Christ. His oneness with the Father is unique, has ever been so, and will remain so through all the future, to the ages of the ages. Well is it for us that it is unique. Because Christ is the pre-eminent Son, He is invested

with the authority and the ability, the right and the resource, to constitute us children ; and we become what we were not before, partakers of the life of God.

His singular kinship is guarantee of the kinship to which He loves to introduce us—a genuine kinship, a transfiguring and intimate relation, a child-rank and a child-nature not of this earth, but most truly divine, even if we may not speak of them just in the same superlative and superhuman category with His Own. The Only-Begotten, Who is without partner or comrade or rival, is also, and rejoices to be, *the First-Born among many brethren*.¹

And consider, John says again, how Christ's is the Glory of an Unbeginning Life. We read, in the eighth chapter of the Gospel, of an hour—there were many such—

¹ Rom. viii. 29 ; Col. i. 15.

when the Jews were in sharp conflict with Jesus. They resented His pretensions. *If anyone keep My word, He had been declaring, he shall not taste of death for ever.*¹ What a fantastic impossibility it seemed! What a cruel falsity! Why, Abraham, the mighty founder of their nation, was dead long since and his bones were dust; and was this obscure Teacher of Nazareth greater than Abraham? But Jesus replied, quietly as was His custom, "*I do not glorify Myself, in obedience to impulses of My Own; there is no glory in self-praise; and I have no need to resort to it—I can appeal for My vindication to the absolute Tribunal: There is My Father to glorify Me, My Father whom you regard and name your God.*" Then He turned to their allusion to Abraham, and gave it surprising meanings,

¹ John viii. 51-58.

portraying Abraham as the eager and the convinced watcher for Himself. "Abraham exulted rapturously in the expectation of seeing My day, and he saw it, and was calmed into firm and restful gladness."

Perhaps when Abraham ventured out, not knowing whither he went ; perhaps when he accepted, in naked faith, the promises of a seed and of a land ; perhaps when he laid his boy upon the altar, accounting that God is able to raise up even from the dead ; perhaps from where he continued to live in the Paradise of the Lord, Whom he trusted and served : his eyes were opened, and he beheld the Word of God made flesh, and he greeted Christ from afar.

But, in truth, Christ had been with him through all the years of his quest and aspiration and desire—

nay, had anticipated and forestalled him, long ere the quest, the aspiration, and the desire were awakened in his soul ; ay, long ere he had any conscious life in the world of men. For *before Abraham was born and came to be*, Jesus went on, *I am*. Simple words, and incalculable words ! Abraham entered into existence ; Christ never entered. Yesterday, to-day, and for ever, He is, in a present which is timeless, and which had no point of commencement as it will have no moment of termination.

Such an eternity is “ darkness to our intellect,” but it is “ sunshine to our heart.” It helps us to realize how the believers of the older and dimmer days could reach their faith, their peace, their holiness, and their fruit-bearing. He was operative under the surface of things, constraining them to Himself. Before

men saw Him face to face, they were cheered by the premonition that already He was on His way. "God's manifestations are not sudden," Dr. A. B. Davidson says; "outposts and skirmishers precede the array of the Lord of Hosts." And, for ourselves, there is strong consolation in the timeless pre-existence of our Lord. The blessing He devised for us before Abraham was, and before the worlds were, is not subject to the vicissitudes, the changes, and the decays of time. It comes out of the tranquillity and abidingness of an everlasting realm. It is permanent. It will endure when the great globe shall dissolve. It can never be shaken.

Consider, John says once more, how Christ's is the Glory of a Perfect Affection. *My glory*,¹ we overhear Him repeating in His High-Priestly

¹ John xvii. 24.

prayer ; and immediately He adds His explanation of the phrase : *For Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.* Glory, in the dictionary of Christ, is Love, the love of God for Him, the love unbroken and unbreakable which had knit together the Father and the Son through the revolving cycles of Their eternal past. He covets no other glory, He can imagine no other, than this consummate love. For Jesus—

There is nothing out of Love hath perpetual worth.

It is the road by which we shall best mount to our conception of the Trinity—the road not of the brain but of the heart, and of sympathy rather than of speculation. God is, and has always been, One in Three and Three in One, because God is, and has always been, Love. “Ere suns and moons could wax

and wane," Father and Son and Spirit were the perfect Lovers—their union and communion a joy unspeakable to Themselves and full of Glory.

How far more winning is our God than the lonely and unfigured despot of the Moslem, more than the chilling and austere king and potentate of Arian and Unitarian! And how sure the pre-existence of Love makes our redemption! A Lord Who has been nurtured in its ardours and fervours, from the beginning which has no beginning, is bound to compassionate us, to seek us, and to find us. The Father will send Him, *for the Father Himself loveth us*; and He will be swift and resolute to come. And having come, and having bought us with His blood, and having led us to Himself, He will not be content till He has finished for us and in us His good

work. The affection He cherishes towards our helpless souls is nothing less than the fire-flame of Jehovah. It has been glowing in His breast, "ere stars were thunder-girt or piled the heavens." Many waters cannot quench it. Our own weaknesses and unworthinesses beat against it in vain. It will not fail nor be discouraged, until it has translated us into something like its own heat and passion and has perfected that which concerns us.

III

That is the Glory of Christ's Pre-existence. We have touched only its outermost fringes, like the woman in the Capernaum crowd who placed a trembling finger on the blue hem of the Lord's garment ; what more can we do ? But for us, as for her, to touch the Glory is to be cured of our plague ; virtue passes out of

it, and out of him Whose it is, and we are made every whit whole.

For the divinity and the eternity of Christ have intensely practical issues. We forfeit our lives, we shipwreck ourselves, when we dispense with them. If we are to be recovered and renewed—recovered and renewed in our lightest part and our deepest being—it seems undeniable that it must be by Some One, in and through Whom God is working. He is not to be a mere agent or messenger. He is to be a real Mediator, Who can have a real effect on the quarrel, and Who can make a real contribution of His Own to the settling of it.

No sinner can do those things, and no creature can, even the most exalted and the most sinless of creatures. One must do it, Who is God as well as Man. If He is exclusively God, He will not lay

hold on us nor lead us captive ; but if He is less than God, by so much as an archangel is less, or the saintliest of the saints, He will not adequately represent God, and He is not strong enough and wise enough and loving enough to bear the burden of the stupendous enterprise. It is Immanuel, the pre-existent God condescending to be *God with us*, Who must stir up His strength and come for our redemption.

And since He is Immanuel, we shall receive from Him no meagre salvation, but a salvation which creates anew our whole spirit and soul and body, and which goes on expanding and multiplying through all the days even unto the end.

II

THE MINISTRY

“ I have glorified Thee on the earth.”—*St. John* xvii. 4.

OUT of purest love for God and for men, the Christ of the Pre-existence became, in the fullness of time, the Christ of the Ministry. He laid aside His crown and sceptre. He veiled His eternal majesty in the frailties of our human flesh. It is true that St. John never forgets, or suffers us to forget, the unearthliness of his Lord. “ The Johannine picture of Christ,” says Dr. Hugh Mackintosh, “ makes on the reader’s mind an impression of harmonious and sublime transcendence.” This is plain and evident

God Who lives and moves among us, we feel as we read. Yet He is plain and evident and very Man, our Brother, One of ourselves.

John will not let any dividing gulf, or shallowest streamlet, sunder Christ from our society. He is wearied at Jacob's well ; He weeps beside the grave of Lazarus ; He looks forward to the Cross now with instinctive shrinking and now with passionate desire ; He is thirsty on Calvary ; He bears in His hands and feet and side, after His resurrection, the marks of the spear and the nails. If, as Thomas Aquinas expresses it enigmatically and finely, " He came forth from but did not leave the Bosom of God," He is always and everywhere the Kinsman of the children, wayward and prodigal children although they are. There were Stoics in the first century, too self-contained, too loftily detached from

the world's unrest and pain and yearning and tenderness, too proud in their aloofness and apathy, to appreciate a Lord Who stooped to carry the sicknesses and infirmities of men. There were Docetists, to whom the humanity of Jesus, the Son of God, was unbelievable, an abasement and degradation of the Divine nature.

But John has not a shred of sympathy with Docetists and Stoics. He counters their errors with his great affirmations of a Jesus Christ Who is not a phantom or an idea, but a Man come in the flesh—a Jesus Christ like unto His brethren in everything except their sins, bone of our bone and soul of our soul.

This Glory—the Glory of Him Who is True God and Perfect Man and One Christ—as it is to be seen in the three years' Ministry; this is our theme at present.

I

The Ministry is a Glory of the Surrendered Will.

Again and again, John, quoting his Lord, or reflecting upon his Lord, has the designation for Christ, *He that came down from Heaven*.¹ "Came down"—it is an eloquent and poignant adverb. From riches to poverty; from the endowments of Godhead to a lowly life under creature-conditions; from the exercise of infinite power to the pathetic abridgments of finite existence; from an unshaded communion with God to a communion less immediate, a praying from a far land, a cry once at least from the depths of a forsaken and orphaned heart: the King of kings and the Son of sons "came down."

There was an untrammelled willing-

¹ John iii. 13; vi. 38, 50, 51.

ness in the coming. Jesus chose without reluctance and with alacrity what Ralph Erskine calls His "perilous road"—the road which led Him through the water and through the blood. But in the Fourth Gospel it is not His Own willingness on which He insists; it is His subordination to the purpose and commandment of God. *The living Father has sent me*¹—that is the conviction He repeats in varying forms. *I can do nothing of Myself*,² He tells us in the meekness and quietness of His spirit. If at one moment He makes the fearless claim, *I and the Father are one*,³ at another moment He shows us with equal explicitness the side of dependence and submission, *The Father is greater than I*⁴; and the second word, not less than the first, is essential to the whole truth.

¹ John vi. 57.² John viii. 28.³ John x. 30.⁴ John xiv. 28.

This Son not only learns obedience, but finds His meat and drink, His good pleasure and His joy, in learning it.

It was so, no doubt, even in His Pre-existence, and in the Godhead and Glory that were not concealed and covered at all. To be a Son, although it is an Only Begotten and Everlasting Son, is to be filial, reverential, attentive to the Father's summons, and dedicated to the Father's service. Like the angel whom Robert Browning paints, Christ

did God's will; to Him, all one
If on the earth or in the sun.

Within the high courts of Heaven, as in the little house at Nazareth, and among the lanes of Galilee, and in the Temple chambers on the hill of Zion, and at the sorrowful place called Calvary, God was the passion of His heart, and He ran God's

errands, and lived for God's praise. But there was something in His incarnate life—a condescension, an abnegation, an uttermost self-emptying—which passed beyond the steadfast and sustained Sonship of the upper country.

Few have written about Christ more understandingly than Martin Luther ; he practised his own rule, “ Wilt thou go surely and meet and grasp God rightly, so finding grace and help in Him ? Let thine art and study begin with Christ, and there let it stay and cling ” ; but, now and then, Luther speaks unadvisedly. He does so when he says, “ It was not humiliation for the Son of God to become flesh ; it was honour.” The New Testament views it otherwise. It pronounces it humiliation, veritable, outright. But then it is humiliation accepted lovingly and with thanksgiving. Christ's

Ministry is the Glory of the surrendered will.

And, one by one, we should covet to plant our foot where the Master has left the print of His shoe. There is no introduction to the family for you and me, till our will submits to God's. There is no growth or fragrance or harvest for you and me, till our will gladly coincides with God's. It is not that, either at the beginning or afterwards, we are automata and lay-figures ; He has little liking for automata, and little room in His household for lay-figures ; His children are reasonable and responsible men and women, with decisions and determinations of their own. But they are men and women who have taken, and are perpetually taking, their decisions and determinations, to yield them up to Him.

Some of these plans and predilections and energies of ours—and here

we part company from Christ—will have to be entirely reversed and overthrown. All of them—and Christ is not in this category either—stand in need of God's amendment and renovation, purging and hallowing. But, whatever their character, we bring them to Him, we put them and ourselves at His disposal, we ask Him to employ them and us for Himself alone ; and now we are in the fellowship of the Son Whom *the Father sanctified and sent into the world*,¹ and Who was heartily willing to be sanctified and sent. "The education I advocate," said Michael Faraday at the Royal Institution, "has for its first and last step Humility." That is the spiritual education for us, its last step Humility as confessedly as its first ; and thus we, too, shall know the Glory of the Surrendered Will.

¹ John x. 36.

II

Moreover, the Ministry is a Glory of the Radiant Walk.

He that seeketh the glory of Him that sent Him, said Jesus once to the captious and carping Jews, *the Same is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.*¹ Find Me a man, it was as if He declared, who has never a thought of personal advantage, but to whom God is Morning Star and Evening Star and Commencement and Course and Goal ; and he is a true man from centre to circumference, with no trace or taint of unrighteousness in him. It is the Christian's aspiration to be such a man ; our chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.

But the best of us is only moving, under divine training, towards this peerless manhood. We have not

¹ John vii. 18.

yet attained ; Christ has arrived. Our desires to live and die for God's glory are not desires in Him ; they are realizations and facts. He may be said to be the Only One of His class ; for all who belong to the class belong to it in virtue of receiving from Him His succour, His strength, and His Spirit. This is His radiant walk. He pursues, without wavering or turning aside, the noblest purpose. He lives to advance and to adorn His Father's name and fame. He "intends to get to God, and 'tis to God He speeds so fast."

Or we become aware of the radiance along another line. Pascal somewhere remarks that he is the highest type of man, in whom complementary and apparently contradictory qualities are joined in agreement ; and, in an unapproachable degree, this was the case with Christ.

“He *pitched His tent among us*,” John says ; “He took up His abode ; and we never saw His like ; for He was *full of grace and truth*.”¹ Grace and truth ! The gentleness that is unfailing ; the charm that is exquisite ; the kindness that has no cause except its own spontaneity and fullness ; the love that does not wait for our love, but forgives and upholds and hopes and endures in spite of all ill-desert and all disappointment : that, on the one hand.

And this, on the other : the light in which is no darkness at all, nor plausibility, nor falsehood ; the holiness which will not tolerate so much as the suggestion of evil, but thinks habitually on what is venerable and just and pure ; the very unity, inward and outward, of the life of God. Grace and truth,

¹ John i. 14.

goodness and severity, righteousness to condemn and mercy to restore, the light that exposes and the love that heals—these pitched their tent in Palestine when Jesus tabernacled there ; they lodged in unruffled concord within His breast ; and when, guilty, lost and helpless in ourselves, we fall into His arms, not once merely but every day, it is our salvation to discover both in Him, and to have both active and busy on our behalf. The walk is radiant, for it is the walk of One Whose perfection has many sides.

Of One, further, Whose perfection is never soiled. *Which of you convicteth Me of sin ?*¹ we hear Christ ask those lynx-eyed opponents of His ; and the keenest and most pitiless of them cannot reply. It is more wonderful that He cannot do it Himself. A conscience so acute

¹ John viii. 46.

as His must have detected the smallest blot on His Own escutcheon, and a heart so sensitive would have felt the bitterest grief over it. But there is no detection, and there is no grief. Christ has not a scar to be cured, nor the recollection of a single defeat in the moral and spiritual war over which to mourn. He stands unafraid before the God Who is a consuming Fire. He is holy, and harmless, and undefiled.

We see the radiance of the walk ; and it is our cordial and reinforcement to see it. It is not only that a tarnished Redeemer would be fatally incapacitated for the enterprise of leading us into life and godliness, having his own faults and failures to concern him. But it is that an untarnished Redeemer, Who has been tempted as we are without once succumbing to temptation, can aid us most and best. He knows the

possibilities, the subtleties, the fascinations of evil, and can compassionate us who know them. He overcame them, and therefore has the skill and the power to provide for us the way of escape and victory. A sinner is an ill judge of sin. He regards it either with an unrelieved repulsion and horror, or with a fond partiality, or with a hard callousness that thinks it a matter of course. It is your Lord and mine, walking unsullied and radiant through a world of sin, Who is able and Who is willing to break our every chain.

III

Again, the Ministry is a Glory of the Satisfying Word.

The discourse of Christ in the Gospel of St. John—His discourse in public and in private—*it is spirit*

*and it is life!*¹ Never man spake, or speaks, like This Man.

His word is certain. Weakness is not in it. It is confident. He knows the truth, and rings it forth with conclusiveness. We put in provisos ; we safeguard our utterances, lest they should prove misleading or only partially trustworthy ; we hesitate to commit ourselves. And this is disheartening to those who listen ; for, as John Foster says, " Men want to feel, ' Yes, it is so ! It must be so ! That, at least, is settled to all eternity ! ' " Christ is different. The undertones of dubiety are absent from His teaching. It is all priceless, and it is all stable and unshakable.

John is the one evangelist who lets us hear the Master preluding His sayings with the double *Amen!*—the solemn *Verily, Verily!* Some

¹ John vi. 63.

twenty-five times we come on the establishing and confirming preface ; and how grateful we are for it ! It is the guarantee to our troubled minds that Christ's word is not " Yea and Nay," but " Yea," beyond recall. I read a criticism the other day of Walt Whitman. The critic said that, as the American singer tries to shout himself into poetry, so he tries to shout himself into faith and joy ; but, behind the shouting, the fear lurks lest he should break down if he stops and thinks. He resolves what he will believe, and with an obstinate " will-to-power " he carries out his resolve. He says to himself and to everybody. " Thy sins be forgiven thee " ; but the question obtrudes and will not be laid to sleep, Are they forgiven after all ? " Clear and sweet is my soul, and clear and sweet is all that is not my soul "—he publishes it often

enough and loudly enough ; but is it true ? Ah, yes, is it true ?—so many of our valiant protestations have to be followed by the wistful and disquieting note of interrogation. But there need be no note of interrogation, when we hearken to Christ speaking. The Glory of certainty is in His word.

And His word is as sufficient as it is certain. It is *a tried stone, a sure foundation*. We rest on it, and it blesses us to-day and to-morrow and for ever. You remember the seven *I Ams* of our Lord in this Gospel : *I am the Bread of Life ; I am the Light of the world ; I am the Door of the sheep ; I am the Good Shepherd ; I am the Resurrection and the Life ; I am the True and Living Way ; I am the True Vine.*¹

And having remembered them,

¹ John vi. 35 ; viii. 12 ; x. 7 ; x. 11 ; xi. 25 ; xiv. 6 ; xv. 1.

and considered each separately, and looked long and deeply into the strength and the wealth and the amplitude of each, you are taught of the Holy Spirit to take them home to yourselves, and to discern in Jesus your Bread and your Light, the Doorway for you into all desirable things, the Shepherd Beautiful Who leads you in green pastures and beside quiet waters, the Resurrection now and here for you from every bondage of death, the open Way to the Father, and the Vine Whose sap and nutriment flow through you and render you fruitful.

You do this in meditation, in prayer, and in faith, week in and week out ; and what more can you wish or seek ? You have all, and abound. We read Christ's sayings, and we cry with Bernard : " I hear not Moses now ; to me he is of stammering tongue. Isaiah's lips are unclean.

Jeremiah cannot speak ; he is a child. He, He Himself, of Whom they speak —He shall speak with me.” The Glory of sufficiency is in the word of Christ.

And His word is as accessible as it is sufficient. We travel through John’s initial chapters, and it is a word of welcome for all sorts of people. There are the first disciples —the fiery young son of Zebedee himself, and the patient plodding Andrew, and Simon Peter, and James, and Philip, and Nathanael. There is Nicodemus, with his gravity, his caution, his erudition, his “system of theology in which,” as one has put it, “there was no place for the Holy Ghost.”

There is the woman of Samaria, volatile, pleasure-loving, more than half pagan, frankly sinful. Christ has His characteristic greeting and characteristic redemption for each.

We may be quite convinced that He can and will speak to our condition. And that being so, our part is threefold. First, we receive His word with teachable souls. Then we keep returning to His word, till it dwells in us richly, and we cannot do without it. And, once more, we ourselves speak His word ; for there is not a heart it cannot renew nor a wilderness it cannot fertilize.

Some years ago, an English nobleman, captain of a man-of-war, was brought to Christ. He was not slow to confess the change. " I want to speak to you," he would say to an officer on board his ship ; " I can assure you it's a great thing to know your sins forgiven." In his Club, he would address its members with an appealing courtesy : " Excuse me, you may not have given attention to the subject, but I have found Christ, and it has filled me with joy."

So he continued for six or seven months, and then, suddenly, his Lord bade him *Come up higher!* God make us similar ambassadors of the satisfying Word and of Him Whose it is.

IV

Finally, the Ministry is a Glory of the Life-giving Work.

When Peter preached to Cornelius, he compressed into two graphic words the short bright course of Christ on earth—the words, διήλθεν εὐεργετῶν, *He went right through, doing good.*¹ John, also, watches Christ “go right through, doing good.” He selects eight typical miracles of the Lord, seven in the three years’ Ministry, one in the forty days of the Resurrection; and these miracles he entitles “Signs.” They were more than marvels. They

¹ Acts x. 38.

were tokens of the inflowing of the grace of God into our fallen world. They demonstrate the great things He is prepared to do for and within us.

In the first of the seven signs of the Ministry, Jesus *manifested His glory*¹; and of the last, that stupendous sign at the sepulchre in Bethany, we hear Him say, *This sickness is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby*.² From Cana to the foot of Calvary, Glory attends the life-giving work of Christ.

And invariably the Glory is a Sign—a message of the transfiguration He can and will accomplish for ourselves. He changed water into wine³; and He kindles our life from commonness into worth, making the ordinary rare and valuable. We complain that our corner is

¹ John ii. 11.

² John xi. 4.

³ John ii. 1-11.

narrow, our duty monotonous, our influence small. But let Him sup with us in our poor and rustic and provincial Cana, and a new colour will suffuse our history, a new effectiveness attach to ourselves. He healed the nobleman's son, compelling the father to confide in His bare and unaccompanied word¹; and He breathes into our life the invigorating air of testing and trust. Till our faith leans implicitly on His promise and Himself; till we recognize that we are braced, and not harmed, when we are tossed to His breast by wants He alone can meet.

He made the sick man at the Pool of Bethesda every whit whole²; and He lifts our life above the helplessness of sin. We look to Him, and live looking, and the disablement of the weary and barren years is terminated, and in His grace and Spirit

¹ John iv. 46-54.

² John v. 2-9.

we are more than conquerors. He fed the multitude in the desert¹; and He fills our life with His supply. For both soul and body He has the adequate provision; and in what we feared was to be a wilderness, and with a few loaves and fishes, He spreads for us a Paschal sacrament and a royal feast.

He stilled the storm on the Lake and in the hearts of the disciples²; and He gives the tempests of our life a charge to befriend us. Through the tumult of our sorrow, and in the dark night of our conscious feebleness, He draws near with a special benediction. He opened the eyes of him who was born blind,³ and He diadems our life with light. Light of knowledge, as He conducts us into widening regions of truth. Light of holiness, as more and more

¹ John vi. 4-14.

² John vi. 16-21.

³ John xi. 1-7.

He fashions us into His Own likeness. Light of deepening peace and heightening joy. He *cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth, and he that was dead came forth*¹; and He carries our life on and up to deathlessness and to Himself. Whether we rise to meet Him in the air, or journey "by the way of the valleys" to see His face, we shall be with Him to *behold His Glory*.

What a life-giving work He achieves! In the Acts of the Martyrs—the martyrs whom Imperial Rome chased through persecution to Christ Himself—there is the tale of a woman named Quartillosia. Her husband and her son had borne the good confession before her, and she was waiting in her cell for the hour of her own release. And one night she had a dream. She thought

¹ John xi. 38-44.

that a Young Man surpassingly tall entered the cell, the Young Man Jesus Christ. He had a bowl of milk in His hand, and He gave her to drink. And she fancied that the great stone which divided the single window of the dungeon into two, and shut out the sky, was removed, and the full face of the sun looked in upon her. So Christ refreshes all our thirst, and takes away all our hindrances and obscurations, and shows us the Sun above the brightness of the sun.

Such is the Glory of His life-giving work. And every aspect of it, every benefaction of it, is for us, if we will claim and receive and enjoy.

We may trust Him fully
All for us to do ;
They that trust Him wholly
Find Him wholly true.

III

THE CROSS

“ Now is the Son of Man glorified.”—*St. John*
xiii. 31.

VERY strange, when we come upon it first, and think of the circumstances in which it was spoken, seems this *Now* of Jesus Christ. *Now* when the next happening will be the betrayal under the olive trees in the Garden ; *now*, when everything is in readiness for the tragedy of Calvary ; *now*, that the hostile human wills are on the verge of success ; *now*, since Judas has gone out into his congenial element of the “ Night,” and will soon have taken the step which is irrevocable—*now*, as never before,

in the most indisputable sense, *is the Son of Man glorified*. The paradox of this Now—its apparent contradiction, and yet its perfect timeliness and truth—is our new subject. We have reached the place where the Cross stands, and we are to ponder the Glory of the place.

Many have failed to detect the Glory. They have fastened attention upon Christ's Now, only on its sorrowful and painful side, or on its humiliating and disastrous side, or on its side of sheer absurdity and impossibility. A suffering Redeemer, a Lord Whose one way to please God and to bless men was the Dolorous Way, was an offence in the early years, and remains for numbers an offence still. He was, and is, a problem too difficult for the mind, an acid test too distasteful for the will. To the Jews, Paul says, a crucified Christ was *a stumbling-block*,

a positive scandal. How, the Jew asked, could a criminal, dying under alien law on a scaffold kept for the discredited, the defeated, and the doomed, be the Messiah of his hopes and prayers? And to the Greeks, the Apostle continues, the Cross was *foolishness*, a thing to be brushed aside with impatient contempt in the case of a divine being. It was not that the Greek was unacquainted with gods who died and rose again; he had a crowd of them in his pantheon, poetic personifications of the processes of nature in its decay and its renewal; but he had never a God like this God, despised and rejected,

When the tetrarch shall abjure Him,
The thief blaspheme,
And scribe and soldier jostle
About the shameful Tree;

he could not, and would not, acquiesce in Him. And those Jews

and Greeks are living, and vocal, among our contemporaries and ourselves.

But John is certain that the paradoxical *Now* is fitting and right. For him no glory is so unrefutable as the Glory of the Cross. You may remember Spenser's picture of Una in her loneliness, when the enchanter Archimago has stolen from her her squire and companion. She is "forsaken, woeful, solitary," in the "woods and wasteness wide." But she is never more lustrous than then. Her angel look

As the great eye of heaven shyned bright,
And made a sunshine in the shadie place.

So to John the lustre of Christ is at its fullest, when Christ appears most forsaken. The language of the Gospel is proof of this. The writer scarcely permits himself to speak of "Death"; that is a word with

gloomy and forbidding associations, out of keeping with the one exodus which has "put some colour into Death's pale face"; he speaks instead of "Glory."

And he will not talk of Christ being "crucified"; crucifixion, as Dr. Edersheim says, is "an unutterable anguish," hideous and hateful. He prefers to talk, as the third and the eighth and the twelfth chapters do, of Christ being *lifted up*¹—a phrase with a double meaning, which raises the mind at once to the cross and to the throne: it recalls the Old Latin of the 96th Psalm, *Dominus regnavit a ligno*, "The Lord hath reigned from the Tree." John is very sure that there is no catastrophe but something triumphant in the dying of Christ, and that the great God our Saviour is reigning from the Tree.

¹ John iii. 14; viii. 28; xii. 32, 34.

It has been argued that this Gospel, being the Gospel not of death but of life, has little to say about the Cross. But the truth is precisely the reverse ; it has much to say. And we can glean but a few handfuls of corn from a harvest-field that is rich and great.

I

So, first of all, John makes us see the Glory of the Cross illuminating the whole of Scripture.

He bids us hearken, as on a day lying far back in his own life but never forgotten, when he had hearkened, to the cry and welcome of the Baptist, *Here is God's Lamb at last, Who bears away the sin of the world*¹ ; and he intends that we shall link the Baptist's greeting with that Golden Passional of the Old Testament, the fifty-third of Isaiah, and

¹ John i. 29.

with its vision of a sacrificial Lamb led to the slaughter for our ransom. He points to the death of Christ as the spiritual interpretation of the brazen serpent lifted by Moses in the wilderness¹; the symbol surrenders its meaning, only when man's curse descends on man's Representative and is removed by Him. And, when we advance to Calvary itself, John is at particular pains to show that its details are palpable fulfilments of the forecasts of prophecy. The legionaries casting lots for the seamless coat; the Saviour's thirst; the fact that not a bone of the Blessed Body is broken; the spear thrust into the Lord's side²—each, with careful emphasis, is connected with an Old Testament word of God.

It is thus—is it not?—that we shall best prove the unity of Scripture. By recognizing in the Cross

¹ John iii. 14. ² John xix. 24, 28, 36, 37.

the key to all that precedes. By discovering the marks and stigmata of Jesus branded ineffaceably on Law and Prophecy and Psalm. By regarding the Bible, from first to last, as one harmonious witness to the grace of God in bearing away the sin of the world. It is a crimson thread which binds the different parts of the Book together. It is the Hill of our Redeemer's *lifting up*, a little Hill among the Alps and Himalayas and Andes of the earth, which dominates the landscape of inspiration, east and west, north and south.

Alight where we choose in the breadth and length of the Divine Word, Christ crucified is not far distant; and there is the swiftest path to that love of loves which we do not merit, and which we can never repay, which comes to meet us in our sins with a mercy that

atones for them all, but which deals in tremendous earnest with these sins, and answers at infinite cost to itself the righteous demands made against them. I once heard Mr. Spurgeon indicate a contrast and announce a predilection. "They said of Grotius," he remarked, "that he found Christ nowhere in the Old Testament, and of Cocceius that he found Him everywhere. I had rather," he went on, "err with Cocceius on the side of excess than with Grotius on the side of defect." So, I trust, should we all. John, at least, has no doubts on the matter. For him the Glory of the Cross illuminates the whole of Scripture.

II

We think again. John makes us see the Glory of the Cross robing and adorning the Sufferer Himself.

Wherever and whenever we en-

counter Christ, He is *fairer than the children of men*; but never is His nobleness so victoriously demonstrated as when in the act of dying and the hour of His Passion He "makes a sunshine in the shadie place," in that grimmest of Valleys of the Shadow of Death. The disciple who knew Him best can furnish many illustrations of it. Weigh and measure if you can, John says, the wonder of the love of Christ in death. He is *the Good Shepherd*, Who acts the shepherd's part, and cleaves to the shepherd's vocation, on to the final sacrifice, from which, in His case, there is no escape.¹ He is the Friend, Whose affection for His friends is so masterfully great that He *lays down His life for them*²; Abélard, with his probing and soaring intellect and his broken spirit and his sin and penitence, thought that

¹ John x. 11.² John xv. 13.

no sentence of Holy Writ, and no other portrait of Jesus, was quite like that, in its tenderness and in its power.

And take in next, if you can, John says, the wonder of the freedom of Christ in death. No one filches His life from Him ; He has *authority to lay it down* and He has *authority to receive it back again*.¹ It is His priestly offering. It is His kingly gift. He parts with it generously, and will resume it royally when the time comes. He does not die under external compulsion ; He dies impelled by an inner purpose which will not be denied. The Cross was not forced upon Jesus ; it was embraced by Jesus. But then gauge and estimate if you can, John says, the wonder of the obedience of Christ in death. There are imperious and holy necessities to which He

¹ John x. 18.

bows. There are *Musts* from which He would not extricate Himself if He could: *The Son of Man must be lifted up,*¹ and *the Corn of Wheat must fall into the ground and die.*²

When Crito pleaded with Socrates in the cell at Athens to avail himself of the plans his disciples had been maturing for his deliverance, the old man replied "No." "Law," he told Crito, "has presided over my birth, my growth, my training, my marriage, all my history; and, if I break it now, I shall be dogged by its angry ghost for ever." Reverence for law—law adamant and beneficent, stern and good—led our Lord, with a submission beyond that of Socrates, to Calvary and the Cross; and Duty wore for Him "the Godhead's most benignant grace."

Love, freedom, and obedience: this is the robe the Sufferer wears,

¹ John iii. 14; xii. 34.

² John xii. 24.

and these are Christ's adornings, as He climbs the Hill and nails Himself to the Tree. Are you surprised that, at the Lord's coming, the Hill breaks for His Apostle into greenness, and the Tree blossoms and buds like Aaron's rod? We require a perfect Person, if we are to have a perfect Atonement.

What manner of Man must the Saviour be, Who dies for the spiritual and eternal salvation of men? He must, if one may put it so, be still greater, finer, wiser, and holier than the Man Who commands the winds and the waves and they obey Him. There must be no flaw in Him; one slightest flaw will ruin His work. There must be all Glory in Him, Glory which is human and Glory which is divine; then shall we know and be persuaded that He is qualified for the desperate task of saving us from our sins and

changing us into His Own image. But this is just the Glory which John perceives emanating from the Cross.

III

We think afresh. John makes us see the Glory of the Cross gleaming out in four directions. He sets us in a universe more spacious than the universe of earth and sea and sky, and Christ crucified is the Centre of it, and His light and His power affect all its parts.

The Glory of the Cross mounts upward, to God the Father: it is the first of the four directions. First indeed, because the Jesus of John is among us men, in life and in death, chiefly that He may reveal and commend the Father. Perhaps we should go farther, and say not "Chiefly" but "Solely" or "Exclusively"; for let the Father be revealed and commended as He should

and John would hold that all other ends have been reached, and that Christ's work is done. And, even in Christ, nothing reveals God so truly, or commends Him so effectually, as the Cross. It is there, as nowhere else, that we have unfolded in its full contents John's definition of the God Whom we adore, *God is Love*.¹ "The love of the Father," Dr. Denney has written, "remains an indeterminate sentimental expression with no clear moral value, and with infinite possibilities of moral misunderstanding," until we behold the Father lifting up His Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but should have everlasting life.

This is the love we want, not explaining our sin away, nor minimizing it, nor excusing it, but taking all its responsibility and all its wage

¹ 1 John iv. 8.

upon itself, and with so great a sum obtaining for us our freedom. This is the God we worship ; not indifferent to the miseries into which we have plunged our life, nor helping us from a remote heaven, but identifying Himself with our necessity, and Himself leading us out into liberty and justification and rest. Such a love and such a God will do more than initiate our redemption. They will never forsake us. They will bear and forbear, and plan and perform, until "sorrow and sin, giant and fiend, are vanquished at last." The Glory of the Cross mounts up to Christ's Father and our Father, Christ's God and our God.

But the Glory strikes downward also, upon evil and its malignant powers. The Cross resembles the pillar of cloud, standing between the camp of Israel and the camp of Egypt, a light to the one, a dark-

ness and discomfiture to the other. If it is the supreme commendation of God, it is the hammer and scourge and destruction of God's adversary and man's. John dwells on this second direction which the Glory takes. *Now shall the Prince of this world be cast out,*¹ he hears Jesus say in anticipation of Calvary. And when Judas leaves the Upper Room, Judas in whom for the moment Satan has incarnated himself, Jesus can exult that His enemy's overthrow and the prosperous issue of His Own campaign are imminent.

*Now He exclaims in manifest relief, now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him : and God shall glorify Him in Himself, and straightway shall He glorify Him.*² The divine prevails over the diabolic, and Calvary is the ground where the battle is gained. John never questions

¹ John xii. 31.² John xiii. 31, 32.

the personality of that strong and subtle and cruel and indefatigable *Prince of this world*.

To his mind Satan is the living protagonist of evil, and a most dread reality. How various his devices are ! how persistent is his pursuit of us ! how hopeless are his captives ! But " the ancient Prince of hell " is not a match for " the Lord Sabaoth's Son." The Cross seals the downfall of Satan and his kingdom, and snatches the prey from the mighty. One is reminded of the old English saga of Beowulf fighting the Grendel, the monster that devastated Denmark, not with a sword—for what sword could wound and penetrate the dragon's hide ?—but with " the handgrip of a man." So Christ fought the wicked and malignant Prince, and conquered him for you and me, doing it with His Own pierced and bleeding hands. And

think you that He cannot free us, hour after hour and completely, from Satan and his hosts ?

And the Glory of the Cross flows inward, through the soul of man ; it is John's third direction. We turn once more to that pregnant object-lesson, the serpent of brass in the wilderness.¹ To look to it in the simplicity of faith was to be plucked from the gaping jaws of death ; and to trust Christ crucified by and for our sins—to trust Him absolutely and alone—is the way, and the one way, by which we pass out of condemnation into pardon and righteousness. Thus the soul's life begins ; and its increase and development are equally dependent on the miracle of Calvary. Christ speaks in this Gospel of the law and principle of His household, that we should *eat His flesh* and *drink His blood*.²

¹ John iii. 14.

² John vi. 53-57.

It is as if He, Who died once for us, must always be dying and rising again within us, repeating His Own experience in that of His people ; according to the profound word of John's beloved brother Paul, *I am crucified with Christ, and I live no more, but Christ liveth in me.*¹

When the Cross breaks first on our gaze, and fills our vision till everything else is superseded, it is the morning of the soul, and we who were dead are a new creation in Christ Jesus. And when the Cross, and the Resurrection behind the Cross, enter practically and experimentally into our being, and enter more and more, the morning light of the soul, so far from being overtaken by shades of the prison-house, marches steadily towards the perfect day. Life is John's *summum bonum* : and he finds life, and life's abundance, flow-

¹ Gal. ii. 20.

ing from the death of Jesus Christ his Lord.

There is a fourth direction. The Glory of the Cross streams outward, to a wide and waiting world. We are astonished to meet Caiaphas among the prophets ; yet, for a brief instant of foresight and insight, God ordains him to their ministry. *Being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation : and not for the nation only, but that He might also gather together into one the children of God that are scattered abroad.*¹ Speaking under the impulse of the Holy Ghost, and with a heavenly authority resident for once in his words, a bad man can testify that Christ's death will bring enfranchisement to many more than the Jews—to enfettered and impotent men beyond the borders of Palestine.

¹ John xi. 51, 52.

And Jesus Himself, when suppliants of Greek birth and nurture asked to see Him, hears the world of the West knocking at His door, and knows that the door cannot be opened except by the rending of His flesh, and finds in the *grain of wheat*,¹ dying a single seed that thirty or sixty or a hundred seeds may live in its stead, the parable and prediction of what His Cross will do. How resplendently prediction and parable have been vindicated !

The human ministry of Christ was restricted by narrow conditions of space and time, and none save a chosen few could come within its benediction. But His Passion, His Sacrifice, and His Atonement broke the barriers down ; He emerged from the limitation into a large room ; and ever since He was *lifted up from the earth*, He has *drawn all men* to

¹ John xii. 24.

Himself.¹ For His uplifting has compelled and secured other upliftings too :

Uplifted are the gates of brass,
The bars of iron yield ;
Behold the King of Glory pass !
The Cross hath won the field.

Upward, downward, inward, and outward, the Glory of the Cross travels and gleams. Nothing, in earth or in heaven, in time or in eternity, wields an influence so multiform and vast.

IV

For a few minutes more, we linger over one aspect of this Glory which interests ourselves—the power which the Cross of Christ exerts upon the new life. We have had hints of the power already, but a sentence or two ought still to be said.

It is Christ's Cross which begets in you and me the Glory of the new

¹ John xii. 32.

life in its quiet and unperturbed assurance. The reconciliation He made is a complete reconciliation. His work is perfect, wanting in nothing. There is no condemnation—there never will or can be any—to them who are in Christ Jesus. To believe in the Son of God once for all delivered for our offences, and to be haunted by the fear of an adverse verdict at the bar of our Judge, or to be uncertain that we are children in the family—this is to be chargeable with a pitiful and blameworthy inconsistency.

Really to believe in the Cross is to be conscious of, and gladdened by, a love of God which goes deeper than all our sins, and is able and willing to emancipate us from them all. It has been wisely said that nothing is more characteristic of churches than their attitude to assurance. “In the Roman Church it is akin to

presumption ; in the Protestant Churches it is a privilege or a duty ; but in the religion of the New Testament it is simply a fact."¹ This is why discipleship in the New Testament throbs and quivers with joy, joy in the Lord, joy which is the Christian's strength.

And as with churches, so with individuals. Assurance should never appear to be presumption. It should not be an occasional privilege, kept for the aristocracy of the kingdom, nor merely a high duty, to be coveted earnestly and sought

with toil of heart and knees and hands
Thro' the long gorge to the far light.

Since Christ has died for the chief of sinners, and since He is our Christ, it should be a fact, almost incredible if you will, but altogether incontestable ; and we should know that

¹ Dr. Denney, *The Death of Christ*, p. 289.

in our Saviour we have passed from death unto life. Then joy will be our habit and heritage, our impulse and our sustenance. Each of us will be God's happy warrior, "attired with sudden brightness like a man inspired."

It is Christ's Cross, too, which fosters in you and me the Glory of the new life in what may be called its sensitiveness and intensity. There is a piercing, regnant, overwhelming appeal in the Cross. It quickens. It stimulates. It captures, and conquers, and commands. It cleanses the nature, and keeps it clean. The sloth which besets our souls, their half-measures and indulgences, their inclination to be contented with a slack and slipshod godliness, their excuses and selfishnesses and compromises, are every one arraigned and convicted and sent to execution, when we have

a true understanding of Calvary. We see at once that no summons can be addressed to the affections, which has such potency as the summons of One Who died to retrieve our derelict lives from death. Dora Greenwell's pitman cries,

I've got a word in my heart, that has made it
glad yet has made it sore ;

I've got a word like a fire in my heart that will
not let me be,

*Jesus the Son of God, Who loved and Who gave
Himself for Me.*

“ Like a fire in our hearts ” the Cross is, when we live looking towards it and Him Who fastened Himself to its anguish and ignominy ; and, morning and night, and summer and winter, it “ will not let us be.”

But it should do as much for the conscience as for the affections. We deplore the weakening of the sense of sin in our time. Christians themselves are too seldom troubled by

sin, acutely, penitently. But we shall shudder at sin, we shall hate and condemn ourselves for our participation in it, we shall recoil from its approach and its solicitation and its stain, we shall hunger and thirst after the holiness which is its opposite, we shall pronounce God's inexorable sentence upon it and all its thoughts and ways, when we tarry beneath the Cross which sin raised and when we abide with Him Whom sin shamed and slew in order that He might put it away from us for ever. There is no school where conscience is so kindled into alertness, so instructed and so refined and deepened, as the school on the Hill of Reproach outside the gate.

Finally, it is Christ's Cross which portrays and communicates to you and me the Glory of the new life in its fullness. That is a striking word of Jesus which John preserves : *For*

*their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth*¹

It is His death which the Lord has in view, for His ministry is over and past when He speaks, and nothing is left Him now but to die. Death is His sanctification of Himself in the most absolute manner, His consecration to God of His spirit and soul and body—why? That He may make possible our truest consecration, and may declare before us in act and in sacrifice what a thorough and entire consecration is. His Cross removes every obstacle which separated us from God.

We trust the Saviour Who nailed Himself to it for our sakes; and forthwith we are in a world where God is our Friend, our Owner, and our All. We can approach Him in peace; He has no quarrel with us any more; and in faith and obedience

¹ John xvii. 19.

we acknowledge ourselves set apart henceforward for Him and for His service.

Yes, but there is more. Surveying the Cross, we are drawn into its fellowship. It is not only the channel of our return to God, and so of our sanctification to Him; it is the standard and model of this sanctification. As Christ consecrated Himself, we, being conformed to Him, following humbly and as far as men and women can, in His footsteps, thrusting from us as He thrust from Him all abatements and all reserves—we consecrate ourselves. See, it is written, *that thou make all things according to the Pattern that was showed thee in the Mount,*¹ not the Mount that burned with fire, but the Mount that is incarnadined with ruddy and precious Blood. These are the stringencies of the

¹ Heb. viii. 5.

new life ; and this is its unearthly fullness.

It will demand the continuous reception by us, and the unremitting activity within us, of the Holy Spirit. But the Spirit's principal anxiety is to hold Christ crucified before our eyes. As He constrains and enables us to understand Him, to appropriate Him, and to be changed ourselves into His image, we know—not in word or in tongue, not in doctrine or in theory alone, but in deed and in truth, in personal experience and in daily holy living—the Gospel of " Full salvation now."

IV

THE REWARD

“ And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me.”—
St. John xvii. 5.

SIR SIDNEY COLVIN tells us that, when young John Keats was a student and dresser in Guy's Hospital, he could, when he chose, bend his mind and will to the tasks before him. Yet his heart was not in them. His thoughts wandered. He declared that poetry and not surgery was the only thing worth living for. Once, when his friend, Charles Cowden Clarke, asked about his prospects in regard to his profession, he acknowledged his own sense of his unfitness for it, and he gave this as his reason :

“The other day, during the lecture, there came a sunbeam into the room, and with it a whole troop of creatures floating in the ray ; and I was off with them to Oberon and fairy-land.”

Your Lord and mine had no such truant thoughts and divided interests as John Keats confesses. In the grim hospital of a stricken world, He finished the work appointed Him, without reluctance of mind or will or heart, and when the work was accomplished, He presented it to His Father as a perfected achievement. Morning, noon, and night, He had walked the sorrow-laden wards, and had drawn near each sickening and repellent case, and had prevailed over the most appalling emergencies. He was our Surgeon and God's Servant, Who did not loiter and never spared Himself. But he was like Keats in this, that

into His hospital, sunbeams came, to brighten its exile and painfulness ; and on the path of the sunbeams He travelled away to a better region than Oberon's fairyland—to His Own Father's House. He did so especially, when things seemed to be at their worst, when death had caught the Good Surgeon Himself in its toils, and when His hour was come. "*Father,*" He said, "it is the last evening, and I have obeyed Thy calls, and everything is done. *Now, glorify Thou Me, with Thyself, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.*"¹

When the humiliation seems deepest. Christ passes at a bound into the exaltation. Within an hour or two of Calvary, He can pray, in quietest hope and assurance, for the wealthy harvest which is to

¹ John xvii. 5.

follow Calvary. He is going *per crucem ad lucem*, and the light will be as of seven days. He is mounting *per ardua ad astra*, and to the "country far beyond the stars," where

above noise and danger
Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles.

His mission is fulfilled ; and without a shadow of misgiving, convinced that nowhere has there been the slightest error or so much as an involuntary mistake, with never a plea that God's judgment on His performance may be tempered here and there by mercy—for Christ alone among the sons of men and the sons of God has no need of mercy—He claims the reward of the fulfilment. *I have glorified Thee : now, O Father, glorify Thou Me.*

At the wealth of this harvest, at the Glory of this Reward, we are to glance. We cannot see far into

a subject so rich and various, but it is our blessedness to see even a little distance.

I

So, at the outset, Christ's reward is the Glory of a Personal Homegoing.

Banished men and women are eager to be back in the old forgotten surroundings where their childhood was spent. In the newer lands of the West and the South, they behold the Hebrides in their dreams, and "the lone shieling on the misty island." Under the Rockies with their "snowtops keen," they see the Antrim hills, Slemish and Trostan, "and the wet rain falling." History commemorates the glorious Return of the Waldenses, eight hundred soldiers of the faith whom Henri Arnaud captained—their resolute march out from the

Geneva, where they had found refuge in the hour of their distress, to the Alpine valleys from which they could not bear to be sundered for any stretch of time.

Christ felt this longing of the heart, the *Heimweh*, the homesickness. He looked up from earth to the Father's bosom. He hungered to be again where He was in His eternity. There is something wistful, pathetic, strangely appealing, in that *Now*,¹ with its note of expectation and satisfaction and yet its note of self-restraint—" *Now, My Father*, the period of banishment is over ; the absence has gained its purpose, and run out to its ending ; and I lay Myself down in Thy breast once more. *Glorify Thou Me, with Thine Own Self* : for Thou art all My Delight and all My Desire." Christ is afresh, after such mid-

¹ John xvii. 5.

night and storm, such sleet and hail, in the haven where He would be.

Yet the personal homegoing is more than personal; it has its vicarious and gracious side; it spells all good and comfortable things for us as well as for Him. It was the old Christ Who returned to His Heavenly seat, and yet it was a new Christ. He was the same, and He was not the same. He went back to resume in its fullness the divinity He had veiled and hidden during that lowly interval of His obedience. But He took with Him from Olivet, the day when the cloud caught Him up, something which He had not possessed in His pre-existence—our true and very manhood; so that, as an old writer has expressed it in a daring but not a presumptuous phrase, “The dust of the earth is on the throne of the Majesty on high.”

Christ is once again the diademed and sceptred King of kings, as He was in His ancient years ; but, in this second royalty of His, He is the King of kings attired in our human nature, our Brother as certainly as our Lord. There is extraordinary consolation in the remembrance. It should refresh us in our present necessities, to think that One of our kith and kin is Master over us, and over all providences and people outside of us, for our well-being. He Who is related to us so closely, Who has such an intimate understanding of us, Who is so much in love with our humanity that He carries it with Him to His government and palace, will without doubt make all things work together for our good.

And our future, equally with our present, is safe with Him. “ What benefit,” the forty-ninth question of

the Heidelberg Catechism asks, "do we receive from Christ's Ascension into Heaven?" And this is part of the answer, "That we have our flesh in Heaven, as a sure pledge that He, as the Head, will also take us, His members, up to Himself." That is our great To-morrow, even more abundant than our To-day. It will be a Face like our face that receives us; a Man like to us we shall love, and be loved by, for ever; a Hand like this hand shall throw open the gates of new life, and beckon us in.

There is more to be said about the homegoing of Jesus. It was not only the Son's flight to the Father, Whose fellowship is His chiefest joy; and our Elder Brother's elevation to kingship and sovereignty: it is the Priest's entrance through the rent veil to the Most Holy Place, the Priest Who bears with Him His

Own sufficient sacrifice. On the evening of His rising day, He *showed to His disciples His hands and His side*, and they *were glad when they saw*¹ the brand-marks of their Lord, the certificates of a completed redemption. These are memorials which He never lays aside.

“The Ransomer Whose clothes are wet and dyed with blood,” to give Him Samuel Rutherford’s title—it is He who befriends us in the innermost sanctuary of the Heavens. There He pleads our cause, after the sublime fashion of the Seventeenth of St. John, but not requiring any more to throw His petitions into the spoken language of the Upper Room in Jerusalem, simply presenting Himself with that constraining eloquence of the nailprints and the scar. We have peace through His wounds, and the intercession of the wounds the

¹ John xx. 20.

Father *heareth always*¹; they have power with men and with God, an infinite power, and they prevail.

II

Such is our Lord's homegoing. But His reward is the Glory, also, of an Abiding Paraclete.

In one sense Christ has gone, but in another sense He never goes. The Holy Spirit, of Whom He had so much to say in His last discourse,² is Christ Himself under another name. Through the Spirit He revisits His followers, and is with them and within them all the days, unseen, but even nearer, and more of a present help, than He could be in His earthly ministry to the men who continued with Him in His temptations. *I will not leave you orphans*, He said to those who were so heavy-hearted over His departure ;

¹ John xi. 42.

² John xiv.-xvi.

*I will come to you.*¹ So unmistakably He would come, and so efficaciously, that they should be gainers and not losers by the change. They were soon to discover that it was *expedient* for themselves, and for the work they had to do, and for the progress of the Kingdom of God, that their Lord was no longer Himself by their side. He was not by their side in visible shape and form; but He was in the citadel of their being, He was the Spring and Motive of their thought and speech and energy, in a more compelling degree than He had ever been before.

It is not, of course, that the Spirit is not Himself a Person, with an individuality and a life which are properly and incontestably His Own. He is as distinctly a Person as the Father is, or the Son. Because He is imperceptible and intangible, mov-

¹ John xiv. 18.

² John xvi. 7.

ing in a sphere which the heart can explore but not the eye or the ear or the hand or the foot ; and because He is very gentle in most of His influences and very quiet in most of His victories ; we may not be easily convinced of His real personality.

He is so entirely selfless and humble too, as Christ foretold when He promised Him. The Spirit, our Lord said, would *not come in His Own name*, and would *not seek His own glory*, and would *not speak of Himself*.¹ Jesus Only was to be His theme, and Jesus Only His boast ; and if Jesus increased, how willing He should be to decrease, until He was lost from sight altogether ! But “ men,” Canon Arthur Robinson has written lately,² “ are more quickly impressed by self-assertion

¹ John xvi. 13, 14.

² *The Holy Spirit and the Individual*, p. 29.

than by self-repression," though, as life goes on, we may change our opinion, and may prize most "the large souls that do not try to impose themselves upon us as smaller natures do." Nothing, at any rate, must rob us of faith in the actual and separate, and compassionate and patient, and vigorous and conquering personality of the Lord the Spirit. Yet He comes to us, and He abides within us, not for His Own sake but for Christ's sake—to render the presence of Christ all-pervasive, and deep, and unchanging, and eternal. Let us lay it down as one of the first principles of the new life, let us never forget it, that we have most of the Holy Spirit, when we are least conscious of Him, and most conscious of the Saviour, the Keeper, the Teacher, and the Master, Whom He brings, Whom He enthrones, and Whom

He makes more and more our own.

“ Paraclete ” He is, in our Lord’s pregnant language—language which, in this case, demands many English words to do it justice. He is Advocate and Monitor, Guardian and Protector, Strengtheners and Comforter, One called to our side to counsel and support and aid. He is Spirit of Truth ; and that is why Christ’s teaching is ever-living and ever-growing, why it has endless capacities of adjustment to new conditions, why it is a message not for one age but for all time, and goes on unfolding itself, and after nineteen centuries gleams and coruscates with the dew of morning and youth. He is Spirit of Power ; and that is why the first Pentecost lifted John and his brethren into a life, a light, a love, a sanctity, a joy, which they had not known previously, and

why every subsequent Pentecost of the Christian community and the Christian soul repeats the astonishing miracle. *The Spirit is given because Jesus is glorified,*¹ and sheds Him down. The Spirit is Jesus, uttering His Own revelations, repeating His Own wonders, and perpetuating His Own activities, through One who is His Representative and *Alter Ego*.

That is the Lord's reward. He is away, and nevertheless He is not away. He is here, amongst us still, in the Holy Ghost Whom He sends in His Name.

III

Yet further, Christ's reward is the Glory of a Witnessing Church.

He remains on earth, not only in His divine Vicar and Friend, the Paraclete Who is the Spirit, but in

¹ John vii. 39.

humbler human friends, whom the Paraclete inhabits and inspires. There is the company of faithful people, to whom He is priceless and dear. There is the flock "named after Christ's Own heart." When He was Himself resident in our lower world, He had those men whom *the Father gave Him*.¹ They were dull and slow, backward and disappointing ; but His love dressed each of them in a coat of many colours, and to His forbearing and forgiving and tender eyes they were invested with a dignity beyond all Greek and Roman fame. And when He took His journey into the far country to receive His kingdom, He made them His heirs and left them behind, to be His living epistles, to win souls for Him, and to build up the fabric of His cause, until the great hour arrives when He shall rend His

¹ John xvii. 6, 12.

heavens and come again. *I am glorified in them*,¹ He says.

Christ, out of sight, commits to the Church the burden and the honour of bearing testimony to Him. From the Gospel of John one gleans many marks of the true Church. Faith is foremost and first; for without faith the Church has not so much as begun to be: it is composed of men and women and children who *believe on*² Jesus, trusting themselves to Him for righteousness and sanctification and redemption, for life and death and eternity; it is composed of them, and of no others. Holiness is a *sine qua non*; the Church is in the world but is *not of the world*³; it is *kept from the evil*⁴; it is *consecrated in truth*⁵; it is *kept in the Name of the Father*⁶.—

¹ John xvii. 10.

² John vii. 39; xvii. 20.

³ John xvii. 14, 16.

⁴ John xvii. 15.

⁵ John xvii. 17.

⁶ John xvii. 11.

the fleckless, unblemished, lustrous Name, whose radiance abases the noonday sun. Prayer is the Church's prerogative and atmosphere¹; there are assurances in this Gospel regarding the possibilities of prayer, and regarding the freedom and boldness with which we should ask, that few of us have grasped in their breadth and height, or are translating into practice as we ought; and, what is just as important, there are danger-signals about the environments and the preoccupations hostile to prayer with which we should be immensely more familiar.

Gladness is the heritage of the Church; silver and gold its King did not bequeathe to it, having Himself chosen a poor man's lot, but He has two legacies for its sons and daughters that are more to be de-

¹ John xiv. 13, 14; xv. 7, 16; xvi. 23.

sired—*My peace*¹ and *My joy*,² the invincible peace, and the overcoming joy :—wherefore, as *The Shepherd of Hermas* says, “ Put sadness away from thee, for sadness is the sister of half-heartedness and bitterness ” ; and, as Bernard of Clairvaux advises, let our hearts reflect that the love of God in Christ is “ not simply stronger than death but better than life ” ; and let us consider, too, in its spiritual as well as its geographical applications, what a traveller in Bible lands notes, that “ From Marah to Elim is only a morning’s march.” And Unity is a hall-mark of the Church : *That they all may be one*³ is the Lord’s entreaty, repeated four times over, for us on whom His heart is set ; a unity at once deeper and more elastic than outward uniformity, springing in my brothers

¹ John xiv. 27.

² John xvii. 13.

³ John xvii. 21, 22, 23.

and in myself from the life that is hidden with Christ in God ; but a unity which has its external attestation none the less, and so convinces the world that Christ and Christianity are divine : without this, all other evidences fail ; with this there is a force which the enemy may not gainsay nor resist.

These are the beautiful garments of the Holy City, these the qualities which constitute the Church an authentic witness to its Head. We should be ashamed that they have not adorned us more clearly and more attractively. It is not only ourselves whom we impoverish. It is not only the world that we defraud of the *apologia* for the faith and the Master we were intended to give it. It is our Lord Who misses the commendation and the praise He ought to have from us.

IV

But the Church, which witnesses as a community, consists of individuals who witness one by one. And Christ's reward is the Glory of a Fruitbearing Disciple.

That brings the matter close to each of us. You by yourself, I by myself—we contribute to the wage and the wealth which the heart of Jesus craves. To His friends on the night before His death, He spoke the allegory of the Vine and its Branches¹—Himself the Vine, and every living and loving follower of His a branch in Him.

I look well at the Vine-branch; it is the delineation of what my Lord designs that I, His disciple, shall be.

I see that life flows into the branch and is received. It is not manu-

¹ John xv. 1-8.

factured with the stir and strain of some panting, revolving, restless machinery. There are no noisy engines. There is no incessant movement of pistons and wheels. It comes, quietly, generously, from the stem of the tree. Outside the little branch itself, are the supplies which enable it to thrive and grow—outside of it, in that mightier organism of which it is a part; and, for itself, it is contented to be a continual borrower, and a debtor through spring and summer and autumn and winter.

I daresay that the parallel is not perfect, and that reasonable and moral beings have responsibilities of their own which twigs and tendrils cannot have. Christ commands me to *abide in Him*,¹ if I would reap the beatitude of His abiding in me. I can recoil from, and refuse, what-

¹ John xv. 4.

ever would interrupt our communion. I can keep the avenues of my soul open to Him in self-abandonment and faith and confidence. Yet it is a parallel brimming over with significance. This is its good cheer : Christ maintains, vitalizes, enlarges, completes the life He conferred ; and as, in sheer helplessness of redeeming and justifying myself, I fell at first into His arms, so to the last, for my progress and my perfecting, I trust Him, and He undertakes for me. Grace in succession to grace the Lord Christ gives, and I am always making myself over to Him. Life flows into the branch and is received.

Next, I see that life flows through the branch and is unhindered. Its sap and juices journey into all the branch's turnings and twinings ; they want to leave no minutest section of it untouched and dry.

If some knot, too independent and too obstinate, should attempt to check their advance, saying in effect to this surging tide of life, *Hitherto, but no farther*, how the branch suffers from the knot's perversity and stubbornness ! Life hates barriers and abridgments ; it seeks and it needs an unrestricted channel and an undisputed sway.

The independence and the obstinacy are not unknown in the spiritual realm. There is a chamber of my nature, a bit of my history, which I scarcely desire to submit to Christ's indwelling power, Christ's untainted holiness, Christ's revolutionizing government : a sin to which I should like to give occasional harbourage, a questionable indulgence I would fain spare and gratify, plans and habits I am disposed to humour though I feel He means me to part with them, modes of saying and doing

His right things to which I adhere although He would have me prefer other modes. That spoils my experience, weakens my usefulness, grieves my Lord. He is sensitive to any rebuff. He cannot do me the good He wishes, unless and until He has unhampered rule. The life must flow through the branch unhindered.

But then I see that life flows forth from the branch and is manifested. It has its illustration and its demonstration. It discloses itself in fruit. The fruit is both the Tree's and the branch's. In its origin and in its sustenance it is the Tree's; its sweetness and its strength emanate only from the parent Stem. Christ enshrined within, in the Person and Potency of His Spirit, alters and transfigures me; not merely prompting what words I speak on His behalf and what works I perform

for the furtherance of His kingdom, but, behind the words and the works, remaking my character, me myself, into the image of His character, the miniature and epitome of Him Himself. You cannot imagine a biography so greatly to be envied.

Yet I partake of Him after my own manner. For in the divine Life-Tree the branches are innumerable, and each branch preserves its specific quality, while all are dependent on the One Centre and Source. A friend told me recently that, talking in Palestine with a grower of Jaffa oranges, he asked him why they had the shape and contour and something of the flavour of lemons. The gardener answered that the orange graft was inserted into a lemon stock, so taking on the lemon's likeness, but none the less remaining an orange still. My poor heart is linked with, and bound to, and

introduced into Christ's infinite heart. I take on His likeness, and things belonging to Him which are far deeper than any outward likeness ; but I remain myself, and now my temperament has its best expansion, and my faculties have their freest play. And *herein is the Father glorified*, and the world gospellized, and the Lord rewarded, that the disciple *bears much fruit*.¹ Life flows forth from the branch, and is manifested to Christ's praise.

V

One thing is left, though it is too big a thing to say much about. Christ's reward is the Glory of an Incomparable Goal.

John, in the Gospel, does not lay the same stress as the Synoptists do on the personal Return, the visible Advent, of our Lord. It is not, of

¹ John xv. 8.

course, that he disbelieves in it. The Apocalypse, in which he wrote the visions that came to him when he was in the Spirit in the isle called Patmos, throbs and palpitates with the mighty hope. In the Gospel, moreover, the Apostle hears and repeats the promise of the Master, *I will come again, and will receive you unto Myself*.¹ To this "region bright," this "heavenly destiny," John knows and is persuaded that he is "stepping westward"; and his heart is aflame with ardour for it, and is patient in expectancy. But he does not linger, with the particularity of his brother evangelists, over the details of the Advent.

Rather, as we have seen, he amplifies the thought of the interior and spiritual Return of Christ to souls who welcome and use the grace of the Holy Ghost. He who cherishes the

¹ John xiv. 3.

Holy Ghost will not be taken at unawares, will not be shamed, when, "at morn or noon or set of sun," the Lord Himself appears.

And, beyond the Advent, John rises to contemplate and taste beforehand the fruition of the eternal future. He has his cluster of the grapes of Eshcol in the wilderness. "Oh, the full joys," cries Richard Baxter, "offered to a believer in one sentence of Christ's! I would not, for all the world, that one verse had been left out of the Bible—*Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory which Thou hast given Me.*"¹ None of us could endure to lose the verse. When Baxter's great contemporary, John Owen, with whom he did not always agree on earth though they are of the same mind in the heavenly

¹ John xvii. 24.

city, lay dying in 1683, a friend called to inform him that his *Meditations on the Glory of Christ* had begun to pass through the press. "I am glad to hear it," the old man exclaimed; "but the long-wished-for day is come at last, when I shall see that Glory in another manner than I have ever done, or am capable of doing, in this world." So will you and I, if we can add with John Owen, "I am going to Him Whom my soul has loved, or rather Who has loved me with an everlasting love—which is the whole ground of all my consolation." Christ *wills* that we behold His Glory; and no fiat of his kingly will can be overthrown.

VI

There lived in Scotland, last century, a great saint, a great scholar, and a little child in the family of God—Dr. John Duncan. "I am

getting old," he said to a friend, "and can't rack my brain perpetually over knotty questions. But there are two scenes from old age I often think of. The Archduchess of Hungary told me once of a theological Professor at Pesth, who, when in his dotage, was oblivious of everything. But troops of children used to follow him, and laying his hand on their heads, all he could say was *Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός*—Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ. The other story is that of an old man who was dying, and his memory quite gone. His own name was mentioned: 'Don't know that man.' His grandchildren's names: he shook his head. The Saviour's Name—when, leaping up with energy, he cried, 'Ah, Jesus Christ! my Saviour, my God!' Were I so old as to be in my dotage," John Duncan added,

“ I should like to have the spirit of these men.”

Old or young, we shall echo the wish and prayer. God make the Christ of the Pre-existence, of the Ministry, of the Cross, and of the Reward, all our Salvation, all our Desire, and all our Glory.



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